

NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
131 CEDAR STREET
CONFERENCE ROOM THREE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2010
7:00 p.m.

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioner Thomas Bowen
Commissioner Michael Gerhart
Commissioner James Marocchini
Commissioner David Marsden, alternate, seated for vacant member
Commissioner Greg Polk
Commissioner Kevin Chick, alternate, not seated
Chairman Thomas Shields
Town Planner, Ed Meehan

Mayor Jeff Wright

Town Council Liaison Scott McBride

II. MEETING MINUTES January 6, 2010

Commissioner Chick moved that the minutes of the regular meeting of January 6, 2010 be accepted. It was seconded by Commissioner Marocchini. The motion carried unanimously.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

David Pruett, Chairman of the TPZ gave brief comments concerning his support of cleaning up the National Welding property.

Mr. Frank Aieda praised Chairman Tom Shields for the wealth of experience he brings as the newly appointed chairman of this commission.

Dominic Paine spoke about the Draft 2020 Town Plan and encouraged EDC to submit their comments. Rose Lyons was concerned that there were no lights on the easterly side of the municipal parking lot at Constitution Square.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. BUSINESS CALL PROGRAM

Area 1 – Tom Shields
Area 2 – David Marsden

Area 3 – Mary Niro
Area 4 – Greg Polk
Area 5 – Jim Marocchini
Area 6A – Dana Woods
Area 6B – Mike Longo
Area 7 – Mike Gerhart
Area 8 – Tom Bowen

B. DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

Commissioner Marocchini and commissioner Gerhart agreed to serve on the downtown revitalization committee. Chairman Shields requested their names be forwarded to the Town Council for appointment on February 9, 2010.

C. MARKET SQUARE AND MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT EAST SIDE

Chairman Shields opened the discussion stating that the parking lot contractor, Quality Associates has agreed to hold their bid prices for completion of the east side lot at \$495,250.00.

Mayor Wright requested to address the commission and present his proposal for allocation of CIP funds, value engineering and reprogramming of the Market Square Phase IV streetscape grant, setting aside \$90,000.00 for RFP engineering design and cost estimate and \$260,000.00 toward east side parking lot completion.

Commissioner Bowen stated he felt the Market Square streetscape should not be delayed and the Town Council could use the CIP to fund the estimated \$350,000.00 that might be needed to complete this work.

Mr. Meehan noted that OPM and DECD would have to be contacted and requested to approve the reprogramming of the \$260,000.00 STEAP IV grant to the east side parking lot completion work.

Mayor Wright felt that the opportunity to complete the municipal parking lot should not be passed up. With careful timing and sufficient funding the east side lot could be finished and the Market Square improvements designed and ready for bid and completion by late fall 2011. Chairman Shields agreed it would be better to finish the east side of the parking lot now and turn the Market Square streetscape design over to the Downtown Revitalization Committee for working with property owners and businesses.

Mr. Bowen stated he could support funding completion of the east side of the parking lot if the Town Council would provide adequate CIP funding to complete Market square. Mayor Wright said he would propose to the Town Council to use the 2010-2011 CIP for Market Square Streetscape, estimated cost at \$630,000.00 town funds in budget year to start July 1, 2010.

Commissioner Gerhart made a motion to accept the Mayor's proposal. Commissioner Marocchini seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Shields recommended that this proposal be passed to the Town Council for their consideration to get these projects completed by 2011. Mayor Wright thanked everyone on this commission for their hard work and diligence in this effort.

D. NATIONAL WELDING PROJECT

Mr. Bowen referred to a recent newspaper article that reported Newington's support of the busway project and higher density transit oriented development. Mr. Meehan reported that the TPZ is working on edits to the draft Town Plan to delete references to high density housing linked to transit oriented development. The TPZ recognizes the transit opportunities at Cedar/Fenn and Newington Junction but is continuing to revise the draft plan for additional public comments relative to higher density housing strategies.

E. STATE OF THE TOWN BREAKFAST

FEBRUARY 11, 2010 HIGH SCHOOL 7:45 AM REGISTRATION, PROGRAM BEGINS 8:30 AM.

F. HOME BUSINESS SHOWCASE

Chamber of Commerce Business Showcase will be held March 19th and March 20, 2010. Volunteers are needed for setting up and working the EDC booth on March 20, 2010.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. STATUS OF MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Chairman Shields was concerned about putting in granite curbing into possible frosty ground. Mr. Meehan clarified that they were just being set in, not cemented, and being inspected on a regular basis. Commissioner Bowen was concerned about putting down base pavement in late December regarding the frost/thaw cycle and Mr. Meehan noted that certain soft areas have been reprocessed and will be renewed in the Spring.

B. DISCUSSION DRAFT 2020 PLAN CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Meehan reminded the commission that the TPZ's public hearing on the draft town Plan will be continued through March.

C. DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION REPORT – VAL GINN

Mr. Meehan received an e-mail from Commissioner Ginn stating a meeting was held last Tuesday and they were working on the by-laws. There will be more information at the next EDC meeting.

D. BUDNEY INDUSTRIAL PARK

Chairman Shields referred to the Budney Park restrictive covenants and request for modifications where the fire was at Kitchen Express which was passed out as a memorandum from Town Planner Ed Meehan to the members of this commission. Mr. Meehan explained that when this land was made available, they developed industrial covenants and these covenants require each lot to be used for commercial manufacturing light industrial covenants and these covenants require each lot to be used for commercial manufacturing, light industrial purposes and prohibits retail, personal service uses, etc. The two buildings 3310 and 3300 are at the corner of the Berlin Turnpike and Budney Road.

Mr. Meehan indicated that if these industrial renters want to petition the ECD to relieve the declaration and it is supported by the Town Council, then the Town Attorney would file an amended declaration on the land records saying that the restrictions as far as uses go, is waived, but they would still be restricted by zoning uses. If these restrictions are lifted, it may increase the market value.

Commissioner Bowen inquired as to the initial intent of the restrictions and Mr. Meehan surmised they were put in order to have a homogeneous industrial park, but this covenant goes back to the 1980's. Mr. Meehan noted right now there is probably not enough parking space. The type of uses in the park is restricted to manufacturing, processing, wholesale trade, warehousing, research, education, office management and industrial equipment sales. Commissioner Gerhart noted the letter from Attorney Boorman stating the restrictions were of significance.

Mr. Meehan replied that it was also stated to obtain waivers by all of the property owners and the town as to their right to enforce permission of non-permitted uses. There was also a second option which stated that at the conclusion of the court case, the amendment to the Budney declaration would include the modification process set forth in the regulations of the Newington Industrial Park declarations and 100% cooperation is needed by all of the property owners as well as the Town. Therefore, an amendment of the Budney covenants would have to be established to create the process to modify by 75%. The property owners would have to initiate this procedure and now is the time to support this change.

VI. REMARKS BY COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Shields noted there would be a rearrangement of the public participation portion of the meeting at next month's meeting agenda.

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Rose Lyons commented on the Market Square/Steap Grant allocation and the transferring of funds to complete this project.

Council member Maureen Klett commented on Governor Rell's annual speech to the legislature and also the improvements of Market Square and the parking lot. She was concerned regarding the work load of Town Planner Ed Meehan and his added duties to this commission, suggesting hiring a part time Economic development Director.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Marocchini made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Bowen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sophie Glenn
Recording secretary